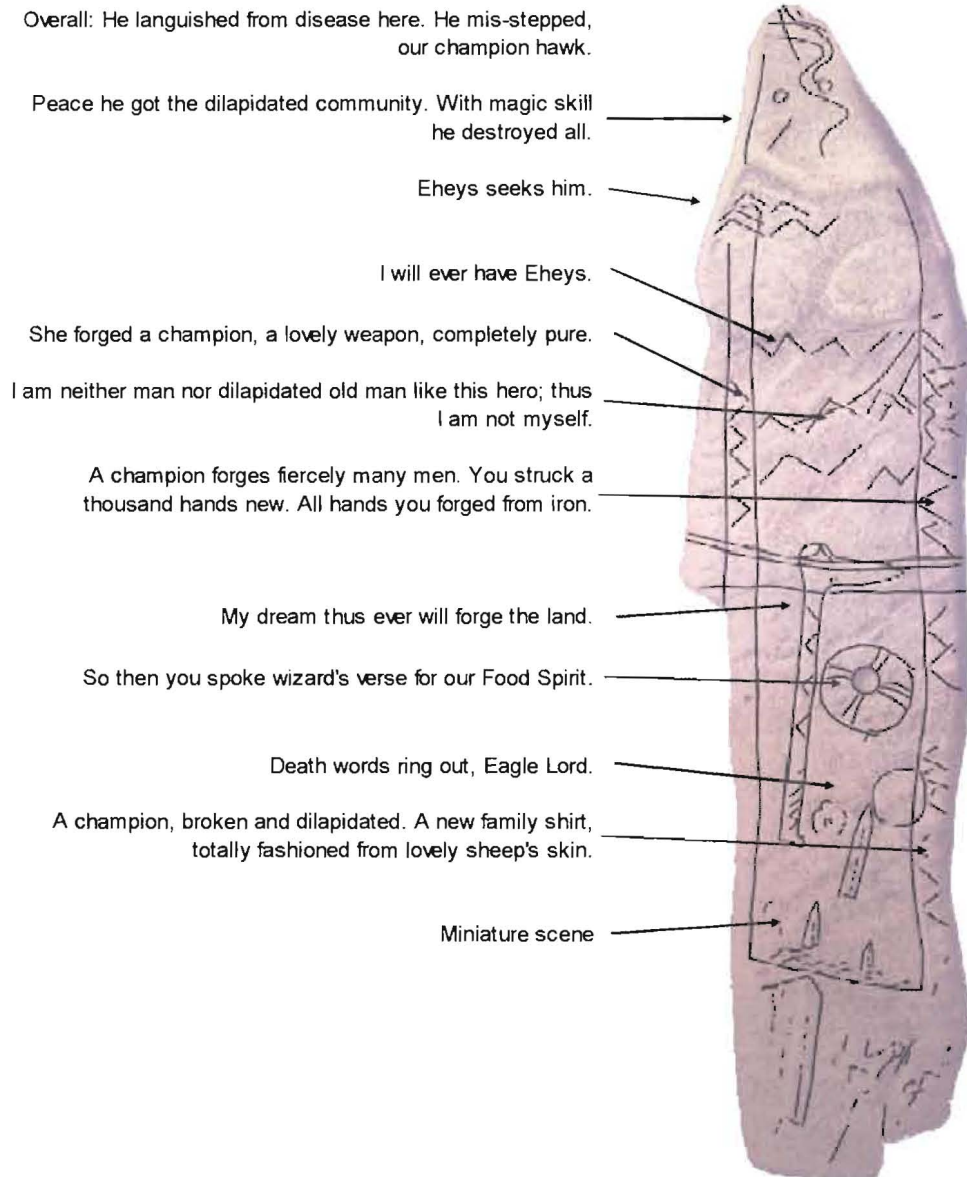


# Lord Eagle of Navarre: translation of Soalar Menhir

Stuart Harris, April 2013, Andorra



**Figure 1 Museum rubbing of the Soalar Menhir with inscriptions enhanced and the translation of each inscription from Old European.<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> How to read Old European can be found on Christine Pellech's website [www.migration-diffusion.info](http://www.migration-diffusion.info) under the author Stuart Harris.

## Soalar Menhir

### Importance of Soalar Menhir

Of all menhirs discovered in Europe, only Soalar Menhir was found in pristine condition because it lay face-down in the ground for three millenia. Detailed writing and drawing that covered the menhir remained intact, and constitute the longest set of inscriptions in Old European found anywhere. They describe the exploits, contributions and death of Lord Eagle, who lived in present day Navarra among people whom Romans called Vascones<sup>2</sup>. His name and image adorn the flag of Navarra, called Black Eagle because he had black hair. Both are rebuses.

The two rebuses from the region of Pamplona used 39 different syllables from Old European, of which 14 were written in two different ways. Of the total, five were new to me:

LÄ, made by modifying LA,

LÖ, made by modifying LO,

SÄ split two parallel horizontal lines into two adjacent horizontal lines,

TI was rotated ninety degrees,

TU was oriented four different ways.

Figure 2 Syllabary of Old European used to write about Lord Eagle of Navarra.

	A	Ä	E	I	O	Ö	U	Y
Vowels	a	ä	e	i	o	ö	u	y
H	ha	hä	he	hi	ho	hö	hu	hy
J	ja	jä	je		jo	jö	ju	jy
K	ka	kä	ke	ki	ko	kö	ku	ky
L	la	lä	le	li	lo	lö	lu	ly
M	ma	mä	me	mi	mo	mö	mu	my
N	na	nä	ne	ni	no	nö	nu	ny
P	pa	pä	pe	pi	po	pö	pu	py
R	ra	rä	re	ri	ro	rö	ru	ry
S	sa	sä	se	si	so	sö	su	sy
T	ta	tä	te	ti	to	tö	tu	ty
V	va	vä	ve	vi	vo	vö	vu	vy

<sup>2</sup> Vascones (and Basque) comes from Finnish Pääskönes meaning 'Not-get-together clan'.

### History of Soalar Menhir

Remote hilltops in the mountains of Navarra north of Pamplona abound in megalithic monuments, but only one has a legible inscription. Called Menhir de Soalar<sup>3</sup>, it now resides in the Ethnographic Museum Oteiza Baztan in the riverside town of Elizondo<sup>4</sup> in the valley of Baztan<sup>5</sup>, where it dominates the central garden of the newly renovated museum.<sup>6</sup> It may be the most richly decorated menhir ever conceived, and certainly the only one now in existence.

An estimated 50,000 menhirs once populated Europe, erected between 5000 BC and 1000 BC, of which 10,000 remain. In the Middle Ages, these immense standing stones were believed to have been built by giants. Unlike most menhirs, this stone lay buried face down in the ground and thus preserved detailed inscriptions written in Old European, a language identical to Finnish.

The deceased was a giant warrior called Lord Eagle (Aarne Herra), at least 12 feet tall, whose strength and knowledge brought peace and prosperity to the community sometime between 1250 BC and 700 BC; my guess is 1160 BC. Archaeology reveals a major expansion of farming to augment sheep and cattle raising, possibly by employing a metal-tipped plow in the stony soil.

In 1974, Father Ondarra discovered the red sandstone menhir atop Mount Soalar<sup>7</sup>, lying face down, partly embedded in the ground. The menhir measures 14 ft long (4.35 m) and weighs nearly four tons (3500 kg). Its face-down position protected the inscriptions from weathering. The front side contains the image of an old warrior 12 feet tall (3.66m), dressed in funeral clothing.

*Figure 3 Menhir de Soalar lying face-down on the ground.*



In 1992, a man heard about the stone and moved it 15 km to a construction site to make a lintel for a building. A year later Father Ondarra spotted the stone and told the thief to return the stone to its original location. Instead, the thief sold the stone to a neighbor, who carried it dangling

<sup>3</sup> Soalar comes from *soala auer* meaning 'battle-ground haze' in Finnish.

<sup>4</sup> Elizonda comes from *eleiza-onda* meaning 'church beside' in Basque.

<sup>5</sup> Baztan comes from *vastaan* meaning 'against' in Finnish.

<sup>6</sup> Many thanks to Paula Galañena Iriarte, a Basque native and mayor of Oiategi, who guided me through twisting back streets of Elizondo amid drenching rain to reach the Oteiza Baztan Museum, then persuaded the lovely custodian to keep it open long enough for me to closely examine the menhir. Between the two women, they suggested I also research the Black Eagle, whose origin was lost in antiquity.

<sup>7</sup> Mount Soalar lies 4 km east of Rio Baztan at Elizondo, 43.136193N, 1.461782W, 870m elevation.



## Soalar Menhir

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from the bucket of his tractor to his home, where he installed it upside down to fasten a basketball backboard.

*Figure 4 Soalar Menhir with basketball hoop.*



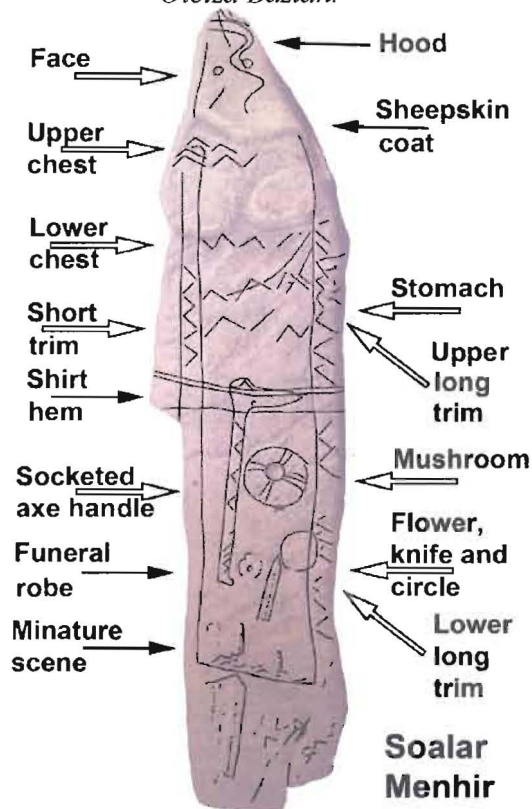
Ten years passed before a visitor recognized the stone in its new location and informed Hilharriak, a group trying to preserve antiquities. They inspected the stone and noticed an engraving of a battle axe. In January 2004 it was officially declared a national monument, and in April moved to the museum. Unfortunately twenty years of weathering has erased nearly everything except the outline of the battle axe, a tragic loss.

*Figure 5 Current installation of Soalar Menhir; little remains of the inscription.*



Luckily a rubbing exists, a miniature of which the museum exhibits beside the menhir, from which I took this photograph. The figure is a rebus, made up of letters arranged to look like a warrior by an extremely skilled scribe, who wrote in Old European. In the image below, the hollow arrows point to inscriptions.

*Figure 6 Rubbing of Soalar Menhir with inscriptions enhanced. Source: Ethnographic Museum Oteiza Baztan.*



### Assessment of Soalar Menhir

The script is Old European, not Iberian, so the minimum date is 700 BC.

The socketed axe was common from the end of the late Bronze Age to 600 BC, so the menhir dates between 1300 BC and 700 BC.

The century after 1260 BC was turbulent in Europe; many places were almost annihilated by natural catastrophes. Global temperatures fell and plunged the Baltic into bitter cold with little if any summer. To survive, entire nations migrated south, frequently finding little competition in a decimated world. It was under these terrible conditions that I think Lord Eagle rescued the people of Navarra. My guess: 1160 BC.

There are a total of 81 letters, the most I have encountered in Old European.

The figure is male, attested by an inscription on the stomach 'old man', and his name Lord Eagle.

The entire menhir comprises a rebus that depicts Lord Eagle and tells how he died.

## Soalar Menhir

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Although deceased, he is portrayed as standing with his eyes open. From his vantage point on the mountain, he looked out across green valleys to snow-capped mountains, the realm of eagles. Moreover, he soared above the miniature landscape depicted at the bottom of his robe.

He wears a hip-length, fur-trimmed coat with embroidery down both sides that is writing. Both arms hide beneath the coat, with only their elbows showing. Beneath the coat, he wears a funeral robe that covers both feet, with personal artifacts laid on top.

More than likely he was cremated, as remains of giants are extremely rare.

A triangular hood (or possibly long hair) falls to the shoulders and frames an abstract face with two eyes, a nose and wavy hair that is also writing.

His chest becomes a mature male, slightly lopsided. Others have suggested he wears pectoral armor made from leather beneath the coat. Above and below the chest are two inscriptions that would be suitable for gravestones.

At the bottom of the robe a mushroom, stone knife and circle intone his name, Lord Eagle.

An inscription like the underside of a mushroom at the bottom of the robe says he was a shaman, who recited magic verse to the Food Spirit, which presumably brought prosperity to the community.

A miniature scene at the bottom of the robe portrays a festive mood for constructing the menhir, with people dancing, playing games and cooking.

The mythology of Navarra centers around a Black Eagle from remote times, whose image adorns the flag of Navarra. This image is also a rebus in Old European, which says that Black Eagle saved the population: "He brought pasture, he created tall sons". Black Eagle and Lord Eagle are the same person.

### Socketed axe handle length vs. height of warrior

From the hem of the coat hangs a long-handled implement with an inscription along the wood handle. The inscription says the implement will now forge the land, not strike people. The formal report classifies the implement as a halberd, but halberds are relatively modern, made of steel, and attach to a straight handle without the right-angle bend. Instead, the implement is the handle of a socketed axe. It is not a palstave, which on average weighed twice as much as a socketed axe.

**Flanged Palstave** (1800-1500 BC) is asymmetrical, with two flanges bent around a wood handle. The flanges have a slight waist to keep the leather binding cords from slipping. The heel of the blade abuts against the handle to prevent the blade from slipping back.

**Ribbed Palstave** (1500-600 BC) has a central tang with high ridges that insets into a matching split in the wood. A leather thong binds the wood to the palstave. A rib across the center of the palstave stops the tang from moving backward and splitting the wood. The wood must have a slight waist to prevent the leather thongs from sliding.

The menhir wood has a taper, so it was not suitable for a palstave.

**Socketed axe** (1500-600 BC, with widespread use after 1200 BC) has a hollow, tapered socket that the wood slides into. The socket prevents the wood from splitting, and the taper insures a tighter fit with each blow. Leather binding reinforces the socket. Cast ferrules kept the leather reinforcement from slipping. Blades for chopping wood were wide, while blades for penetrating armor were narrow.



The menhir wood has a taper, so it was meant for a socketed axe.

Figure 7 (L) Flanged palstave; (M) Symmetrical palstave; (R) Socketed axe with loop lashed to wood handle



The axe handle is 111 cm long and the tapered portion 24 cm long, which means the axe head would have been about 33 cm long. A survey of 1248 socketed axes<sup>8</sup> found the longest to be 13 cm and weighed 0.4 kg. The lightest axe head at 12.5 cm long weighed only 0.2 kg. Weight increases somewhat less than the cube of length, so a 33 cm axe head would weigh between 3.0 and 6.6 kilos (6.6-14.5 pounds).

In the survey, only 19 axes weighed over 0.5 kg, and none over 0.55 kg. The weight of an axe a man can wield increases as the cube of height. If we assign the heaviest 0.55 kg axe head to someone 2 m tall (6'7"), then an axe weighing 6-12 times as much could be wielded by someone the cube root of 6 or 12 tall, or 3.63 m to 4.6 m tall (12-15 ft). If the axe handle is actual size, and the axe head made as light as possible for ease of use, then the warrior might have been 12 feet tall in order to wield it with one hand while holding a shield in the other. Thus the 12-foot tall figure is probably life-size.

### Menhir overall: 'He languished from disease here'

The entire stone is a rebus that presents a fairly realistic image of Lord Eagle dressed in funeral attire while relating how he lost his life. Their champion, likened to a hawk, died from a miss-step that resulted in a wasting disease. Like a bird, he soars above a miniature landscape of funeral activities at the base of his robe. Each part of the overall rebus carries additional text, some of which are also rebuses, such as his face, mushroom and decorative trim of the coat. It is a masterpiece.

### Translation

Old Eur: RI-TU TA TÄ-SÄ; HA-RA, U-ME HA-KA.

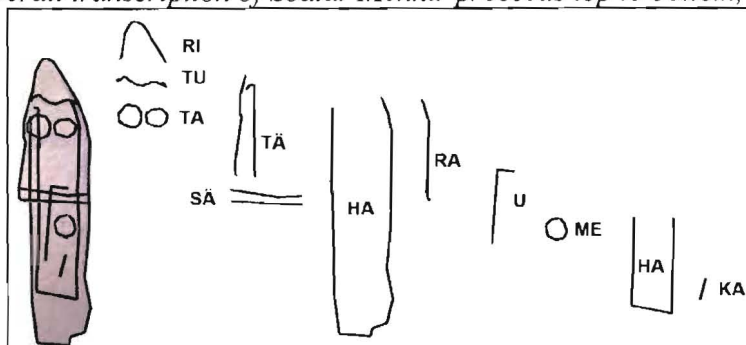
Finnish: Riutui tauin tässä; hairahi, urhomme haukka.

English: He languished from disease here; he miss-stepped, our champion hawk.

<sup>8</sup> Charles Mount, Analysis of the weights of socketed axes, <http://www.academia.edu/941054>.

## Soalar Menhir

Figure 8 Overall transcription of Soalar Menhir proceeds top to bottom, left to right..



### Notes on overall design translation

RI-TU < *riutui* 'he languished', an astonishing solution to inscribing the top of the menhir.

TA < *tauin* 'from disease', made two circles not look female by being lopsided..

TÄ-SÄ < *tässä* 'here', two letters go together to satisfy vowel harmony.

HA-RA < *hairahi* 'he miss-stepped', rare pronunciation of *erehtyi*, in Kalevala.

U-ME < *urhomme* 'our champion', pronounced with silent R

HA-KA < *haukka* < 'hawk', also *haukan* 'hawk', both in Kalevala, so etymology is Finnish.

### Face of Soalar Menhir: 'Peace he got the dilapidated community'

Writing proceeds left to right, top to bottom. The language is Finnish, the script Old European.

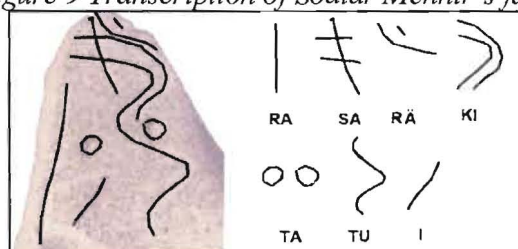
### Translation

Old Eur: RA SA RÄ KI. TA TU I.

Finnish: Rauha sai rähjä kia. Taion tuhoi ihan.

English: Peace he got the dilapidated community. With magic skill he destroyed all.

Figure 9 Transcription of Soalar Menhir's face.



### Notes on face translation

I could precede TA (to the left) or follow TA (beneath).

RA < *rauha* 'peace'

SA < *sai* 'he got', from *saada* 'to get, receive'

RÄ < *rähjä* 'the dilapidated'; RÄ, like a hockey stick, normally faces the other direction; the mark above it identifies the letter.

KI < *kia* 'settlement, community'; alternative to *kylä* 'village'

TA < *taion* 'with magic skill'

TU < *tuhoi* 'he destroyed'; The angle-shaped nose with recurved ends becomes TU.

I < *ihan* 'all, totally, completely', from *aivan* 'altogether, entirely'.



### Upper chest of Soalar Menhir: 'Eheys seeks him'

A short inscription above the chest could be placed on anyone's gravestone. *Eheys* is a spiritual Finnish word that means 'harmony, integrity, perfection, unity, one'. English lacks a word like *Eheys*, and so must employ five words to say the same thing.

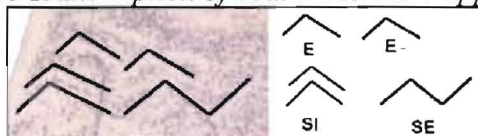
#### Translation

Old Eur: E E-SI SE.

Finnish: Eheys etsiä sen.

English: Eheys seeks him.

Figure 10 Transcription of Soalar Menhir's upper chest.



#### Notes on upper chest translation

The carat sign can be read as either E or RI, which leads to two possible translations. However, within an inscription a sign cannot change value, which eliminates the translation with RI as the inscription would not make sense.

E < *Eheys* 'harmony, integrity, perfection, unity, one'

E-SI < *etsiä* 'seek, seeks, look for'

SE < *sen* 'him, her, it'

### Lower chest of Soalar Menhir: 'I will ever have Eheys'

A short inscription below the chest belongs on a tombstone.

#### Translation

Old Eur: MÄ E I.

Finnish: Mä Eheys iän.

English: I will ever have Eheys.

Figure 11 Transcription of Soalar Menhir's lower chest.



#### Notes on lower chest translation

MÄ < *mä* 'I am, I will have'

E < *Eheys* 'harmony, integrity, perfection, unity, one'; defined as E from face translation.

I < *iän* 'eternal, ever'

### Short trim of Soalar Menhir: 'She forged a champion'

A short vertical inscription on the trim of the coat recognizes that the Great Goddess forged this champion warrior.

#### Translation

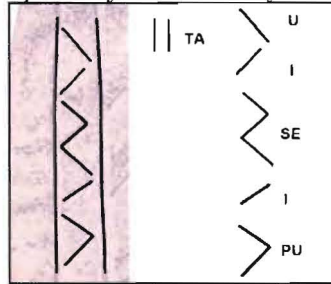
Old Eur: TA U, I [A]-SE, I PU.

Finnish: Ta'oi urho, iha ase, ihan puhas.

English: She forged a champion, a lovely weapon, completely pure.

## Soalar Menhir

Figure 12 Transcription of short trim of Soalar Menhir's coat.



### Notes on short hem translation

TA < *ta'oi* 'she forged' from *takoi*, could be 'he forged'

U < *urho* 'a champion'; left-leaning slant normally *Ä*, but nearby Glozel tablet is U.

I < *iha* 'lovely'

[A]-SE < *ase* 'weapon'; borrows A from preceding word *iha*.

I < *ihan* 'completely'

PU < *puhas* 'pure'

### Axe handle of Soalar Menhir: 'My dream thus ever will forge the land'

The axe handle carries an inscription on the handle. Its name may have been *Uniani* meaning 'My Dream'.

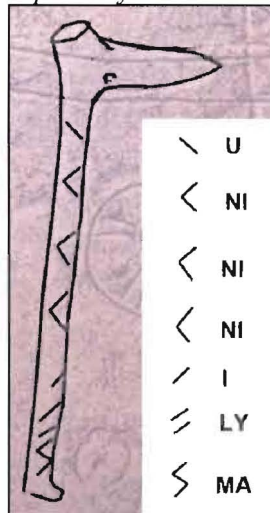
### Translation

Old Eur: U-NI-NI NI I LY MA.

Finnish: Uniani niin iän lyöä maa.

English: My dream thus ever will forge the land.

Figure 13 Transcription of Soalar Menhir's axe handle.



### Notes on axe handle translation

The scribe managed to write three identical letters in a row! This and other ingenious combinations proves he was a master scribe, likely a bard too, as well as a stone mason.

U-NI-NI < *uniani* 'my dream'

NI < *niin* 'thus'

I < *iän* 'ever'

LY < *lyöä* 'will forge, will strike'

MA < *maa* 'the land, the ground'; Surprise! forge the land, not strike enemies, since a socketed axe could also be a hoe or wood axe.

### Mushroom of Soalar Menhir: 'So then you spoke wizard's verse'

On the lower half of Soalar Menhir's robe is an inscription that represents the underside of a mushroom. It says that the deceased was a shaman or wizard, who recited magic verse for Food Spirit.

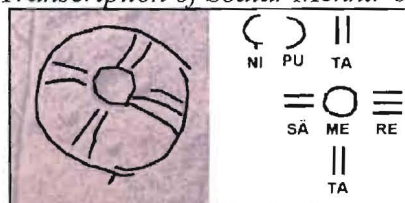
#### Translation

Old Eur: NI PU TA SÄ ME RE-TA.

Finnish: Niin puhuit taian säe meidän Rehutar.

English: So then you spoke wizard's verse for our Food Spirit.

Figure 14 Transcription of Soalar Menhir's mushroom.



#### Notes on mushroom translation

The mushroom would be *Amanita muscaria*, red with white spots, that is hallucinogenic.

Two half circles that slightly overlap are letters NI and PU. The small tick like a nail at the bottom indicates that PU should immediately follow NI.

Food Spirit is central to many religions. In Judaism, she nourishes both body and soul.

NI < *niin* 'then, so then'

PU < *puhuit* 'you spoke'

TA < *taian* 'wizard's'

SÄ < *säe* 'verse'; this would be a song or chant.

ME < *meidän* 'for our'

RE-TA < *rehutar* 'Food spirit'

### Stomach of Soalar Menhir: 'I am neither a man'

A lengthy inscription crosses the mid-section of the coat of Soalar Menhir. It is a comment by the scribe himself, who sees himself as neither man nor old man like the champion warrior. Might he be a eunuch? He is skilled, sensitive and intelligent.

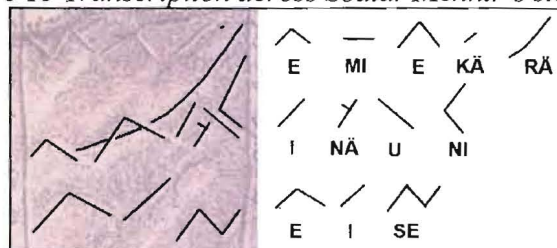
#### Translation

Old Eur: E MI E-KÄ RÄ [Ä]-I NÄ U NI; E I-SE.

Finnish: En miehen eikä rähjä äijä näin urho; niin en itse.

English: I am neither a man nor a dilapidated old man like this hero; thus I am not myself.

Figure 15 Transcription across Soalar Menhir's stomach.





## Soalar Menhir

### Notes on stomach translation

E < *en* 'I am neither', requires *eikä* 'nor'

MI < *miehen* 'a man'

E-KÄ < *eikä* 'nor'

RÄ < *rähjä* 'dilapidated'

[Ä]-I < *äijä* 'old man', borrows Ä from previous word

NÄ < *näin* 'like this'

U < *urho* 'champion'

NI < *niin* 'thus'

E < *en* 'I am not'

I-SE < *itse* 'myself'

### Flower-knife-circle of Soalar Menhir: 'Death words ring out, Lord Eagle'

The lower half of the robe has three images in sequence: flower, knife and circle, with a vertical line through the circle that spells 'Lord', the same sign as that for China. Within the knife are dotted lines that indicate words ringing out. This inscription names the figure Aarne Herra meaning 'Lord Eagle'.

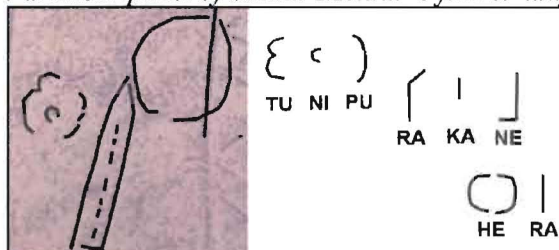
#### Translation

Old Eur: TU-NI PU RA-KA, [A]-NE HE-RA.

Finnish: Tuoni puhe'et raikaa, Aarne Herra.

English: Death words ring out, Eagle Lord.

Figure 16 Transcription of Soalar Menhir's flower-knife-circle..



### Notes on flower-knife-circle translation

TU-NI < *tuoni* 'death'

PU < *puhe* 'et' 'words'

RA-KA < *raikaa* 'ring out'

[A]-NE < *aarne* 'eagle', borrows A from previous word.

HE-RA < *herra* 'lord'

### Black Eagle of Navarre

A **Black Eagle** is the symbol of Navarre, where the menhir was found. It was used as a seal by Sancho III of Navarre, who had under his crown all the territories of Basque culture. It continues in use by Basque nationalists, who call it *Arrano beltza* in Basque. See the article 'Black Eagle of Navarre' for a translation of this image.

Figure 17 The seal of King Sancho VII of Navarre was a black eagle with three white bars and strange-looking talons. Modern images add a yellow background.



### Upper long trim of Soalar Menhir: 'A champion forges fiercely many men'

A long inscription decorates the coat and extends beyond the bottom of the coat. To read the inscription, rotate the trim counterclockwise so that it rests above a horizontal line. The scribe repeated V shapes above a straight line to suggest the sound of repeated blows of a smith's hammer striking metal on an anvil.

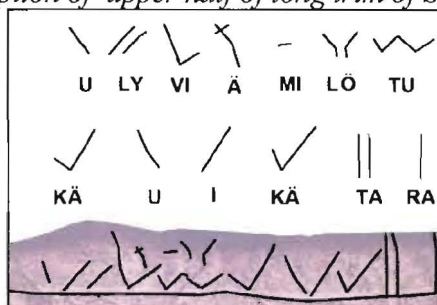
#### Translation

Old Eur: U LY VI A MI. LÖ TU KÄ U. I KÄ TA RA.

Finnish: Urho lyö vihoin äijä miehet. Löit tuhat käet uuet. Ihan käet taoit rauoin.

English: A champion forges fiercely many men. You struck a thousand hands new. All hands you forged from iron.

Figure 18 Transcription of upper half of long trim of Soalar Menhir's coat.



#### Notes on upper long trim translation

U < *urho* 'a champion'

LY < *lyö* 'he forges', past tense is *löi*.

VI < *vihoin* 'fiercely'

Ä < *äijä* 'many'

MI < *miehet* 'men'

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LÖ < *löit* 'you struck', first time ever for this letter, follows known conventions

## Soalar Menhir

TU < *tuhat* 'a thousand'

KÄ < *käet* 'hands', like 'all hands on deck', see next phrase

U < *uuet* 'new'

I < *ihan* 'all'

KÄ < *käet* 'hands'

TA < *taoit* 'you forged'

RA < *rauoin* 'from iron, with a blade'

### Lower long trim of Soalar Menhir: 'A champion, broken and dilapidated'

The lower part of the long trim inscription must also be rotated counter-clockwise so that the letters are written above a horizontal line. In this final transcription, the sensibility of the scribe manifests itself. He manages to write U and I three different times with three different meanings, while at the same time conveying the affection that went into the creation of Lord Eagle's sheepskin coat, which he calls a shirt.

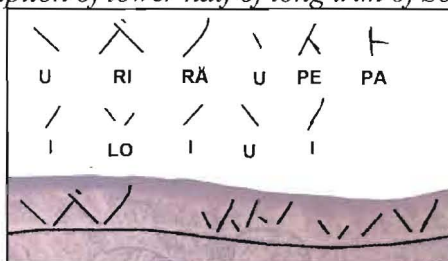
#### Translation

Old Eur: U RI RÄ. U PE PA, I LO I U I.

Finnish: Urho ri'i rähjä. Uuen pe'en paian, ihan loi iha uuhen ihon.

English: A champion, broken and dilapidated. A new family shirt, totally fashioned from lovely sheep's skin.

Figure 19 Transcription of lower half of long trim of Soalar Menhir's coat.



#### Notes on lower long trim translation

Additional V shapes continue the idea of forging an army of a thousand iron hands.

Be interesting to see how the scribe constructed phrases with so many V shapes!

U < *urho* 'champion', first word for U

RI < *ri'i* 'broken', contraction from *rikki* 'broken'; a short mark above differentiates from letter E without the mark.

RÄ < *rähjä* 'dilapidated'; Finnish allows adjacent adjectives without the word 'and'.

U < *uuen* 'new', second word for U.

PE < *pe'en* 'family', from *perhen* 'family, family's', common contraction

PA < *paian* 'shirt'; all three words end in N.

I < *ihan* 'totally, all', first word for I

LO < *loi* 'fashioned, created'

I < *iha* 'lovely', from *ihana*, second word for I

U < *uuhen* 'sheep's', third word for U!

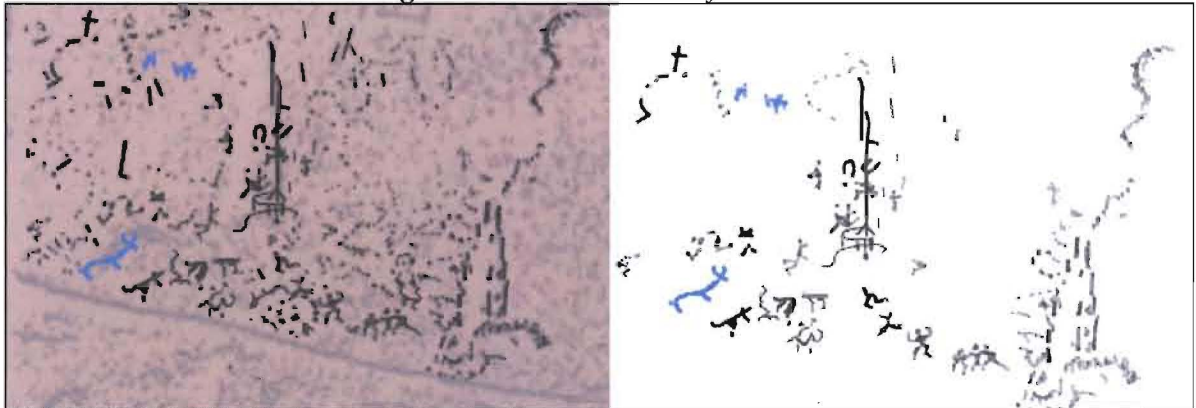
I < *ihon* 'from skin', third word for I!



**Miniature view of site**

At the very bottom of the robe appears the most astonishing thing - a miniature eagle's eye view of the site! People dance, play games and cook. One woman wears a short skirt while another wears a long flounced skirt like a gypsy dancer. In a makeshift corral stand two donkeys, one loaded with a pack, while in the foreground stands a cow. Posts are set up, some random, others in a line. Rocks in a row demarcate certain areas. In the center appears a large drum, while at least three crosses convey the meaning of the site. It may be no accident that many of the traditional Basque dances for which they are famous originated in the valley of Baztan.

*Figure 20 Miniature view of the site.*



For a discussion of this translation, please contact Stuart Harris at [stuhar@onlymyemail.com](mailto:stuhar@onlymyemail.com), or visit the website [www.migration-diffusion.info](http://www.migration-diffusion.info). In addition, this website, administered by Christine Pellech of Vienna, hosts a companion piece 'Black Eagle of Navarre', and contains tools for deciphering other inscriptions in Old European and Iberian.